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La Louisiane sous la Compagnie des Indes. 1717-1731. Par Pierre Heinrich. E. Guilmoto, Paris, 1907.

This work is, of course, devoted to historical topics. And yet it is not without connection with geography in the sense that it is a contribution to knowledge of expansion of geographical information on the countries between the Mississippi and New Mexico between the years 1680 and 1733. The story in itself is a dismal one. It is a tale of daring exploration by devoted and competent individuals in the beginning, afterwards the lamentable picture of ill-use of their achievements by a speculative enterprise utterly corrupt and which held France under the spell of an almost inexplicable hallucination for nearly a quarter of a century. The "Compagnie des Indes," a creation of the unprincipled promoter John Law, mismanaged Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley in general from 1717-1731, and succeeded in nearly destroying everything that the great minds of La Salle, d'Iberville and Bienville had prepared for French colonization. The author imputes to English intrigue many of the mishaps that befell the French colonization in the Mississippi basin; but even if his incriminations are just, it must be confessed that the French attempts at colonization were so ill-managed and made with a human material so poorly selected as to incite almost any neighbour to take advantage of their continuous errors. It required courage on the part of the author to plunge into the sickening mire of incompetency, criminal carelessness and corruption which constitutes the material for the history of Louisiana of that period and present from it a picture of woe and warning, showing at the same time the truth of the oft-repeated statement, that the French are no colonizers. And yet it was not the fault of the French Government, except in so far as it fell into the snares of the British adventurer Law. Both Louis XIV and, in the first years of his reign, Louis XV managed, according to Dr. Heinrich, colonial affairs far more judiciously than the interregnum of the Regency. The main fault, however, lay in the character of the French nation, of the people that afterwards blamed its rulers for what the people had committed, in opposition to wise governmental measures.

Whenever the subject of a book involves the relations of several nationalities it is, in order to be impartial, imperative for the author to consult sources drawn from the documentary material of all the peoples interested, as far as available. This the author of the present book has failed to do. He completely ignores Spanish literature and Spanish documents in general. He would have done well to consult them. Detailed and often monotonously dragging as he is in his treatment of French and English material, it would have been helpful had he learned something of the fate of La Salle's companions from late publications by the Archæological Institute of America (1892) and from the work of Father Espinosa forming the first part of the "Cronica Apostolica y Serafica" (1746) and from the second part by Father Aricibita (1792). A study of Spanish sources on the conditions of New Mexico about the year 1700 would have given him a more sober, because a truthful, idea of the conditions of that Territory and its Spanish colonists than the phantasmagory of mineral wealth believed in by the French. Speaking of the expeditions of Bénard de la Harpe to the Bay St. Bernard, he complains about the unreliable geographical information the French possessed. By referring to the third series of the "Documentos para la Historia de Mexico" he would have found that the Government of Spain was just as badly informed, relying, as it did, at Mexico upon the utterly unreliable authority of Sigüenza y

Góngora. His identification of places in the Southwest would have been modified or materially strengthened had he consulted Spanish manuscript or printed books which are by no means of difficult access. Lastly, his knowledge about the expedition of Pedro de Villazur to the Platte River and its disastrous end (1720) would have become much more profitable to him in a geographical way had he consulted the publications of the Archæological Institute, which are based largely, if not exclusively, upon Spanish documents.

In his descriptions of parts of the West the author is usually fair. So are the French reports upon which he relies. To what extent his depreciation of the book of La Hontan is justified remains yet an open question. More than one traveller in former times has been accused by superficial critics of unreliability and gross mendacity, while subsequent investigations proved him to be at least partly in the right. It is very easy to condemn, from the depths of a commodious armchair, men who have written in the field and from the field and under the impression of an environment to which the critic would be very careful not to expose himself.

On the whole, the book is, within very narrow limits, an accession of some value to French-American literature. While not indispensable in the face of the formidable material already extant on Franco-American colonization, it is not utterly uncalled for. But it should have been made more concise. The frequent repetitions of tales of misery and disgrace are superfluous and finally tire out the reader. Everybody knows that French colonization in North America has been a failure, and there is no need of making it a hackneyed theme by constant recurrence to its gruesome detail. The author of the book, however, has done right and rendered a positive service to historic truth by placing the responsibility of the failure where it belongs, namely, with the French people. A. F. B.

The Pistol and the Revolver. By **A. L. A. Himmelwright.** 157 pp., Illustrations, Appendix and Index. J. J. Little & Co., New York, 1908.

Explorers and others who go out into the wilds will find in this volume clear and concise information and instruction relating to these weapons and how to use them. The book may be carried in the pocket.

Illustrated Pocket Guide to Melrose, Abbotsford, etc. (The Land of Scott.) By **Ralph Richardson.** Third Edition. John Bartholomew & Co., Edinburgh, 1908.

A convenient pocket guide with driving, walking, and cycling routes and a fine route map. The guide was originally prepared for an excursion of the British Association of which the writer acted as leader. It exactly fills the need of tourists in the Scott country.

The Montreux-Bernese-Oberland Railway via The Simmenthal. By **Alfred Ceresole.** English translation by E. de Steiger. 78 pp., many Illustrations from Photographs, and a Map. Art. Institut Orell Füssli, Zurich. (Price, 6d)

One of the finely illustrated handbooks in English issued by Füssli under the general title of "Illustrated Europe" and revealing by text and beautiful pictures what may actually be seen of the Alps along this electric railroad line between Lakes Geneva and Thun.